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**CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS
NAMES JONAH ZEIGER AS NEW DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR THE CHICAGO
FILM OFFICE**

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) today announced Jonah Zeiger as Deputy Commissioner for the Chicago Film Office (CFO). Zeiger replaces Kwame Amoaku who served in this role since 2019 and recently left Chicago government this past June. Zeiger is a film industry leader, educator, producer, programmer, program builder and champion of Chicago-based filmmakers and creative content creators.

“It is a pleasure to welcome Jonah Zeiger as our new Deputy Commissioner for the Chicago Film Office,” said **Mayor Lightfoot**. “Jonah's impressive resume and passion for the arts make him the ideal candidate to lead this office and promote our city's film and entertainment industry. I look forward to seeing the Film Office continue to succeed and expand under this new leadership.”

Prior to joining the Chicago Film Office, Jonah Zeiger served as Assistant Director of the EPICS Office at Northwestern University's School of Communication where he led film and television industry programming and oversaw professional development curricula for three graduate programs: the MFA in Writing for the Screen and Stage, MFA in Documentary Media, and the MS in Leadership for Creative Enterprises (MSLCE). For the MFA programs, he facilitated experiences with leaders from Sundance, The Black List, Participant, Firelight, Video Consortium, and IDA, among others. For MSLCE, he supervised the programming of immersion trips to creative industry capitals and led the program's Los Angeles trips, during which he convened conversations with executives at the major talent agencies, as well as at Disney, Universal, Amazon, HBO, Searchlight, and more.



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“I am honored to be appointed Deputy Commissioner for the Chicago Film Office. I believe Chicago is the leading creative incubator in the United States. Our film and television industry has grown by leaps and bounds over the last 10 years and we have much to celebrate,” shared **Jonah Zeiger**. “I look forward to continuing to build the infrastructure and lasting partnerships needed to grow this industry sustainably and put Chicago stories, talents, and artistry on the screen like never before.”

Since 2020, Zeiger has also served as Chair of the Creative Cabinet and a Strategic Advisor to IFA Chicago, a film nonprofit dedicated to building a Chicago where media creatives can achieve their dreams. Jonah has taught at DePaul University’s School of Cinematic Arts and founded DePaul’s now well-established Visiting Artists Series, and brought figures such as Werner Herzog, Paula Wagner, Tim Robbins, Bob Odenkirk, and others for in-depth onstage conversations filmed in multi-camera. He initiated DePaul’s first partnership with Cinespace Studios, which continues to grow to this day. Prior to moving to Chicago in 2008, Zeiger taught film in Mexico City, project managed film and performing arts at MASS MoCA, the largest museum of contemporary art in the world, and worked in various capacities with leading figures from independent film and experimental theatre in New York City, including Steve Buscemi, Joseph Chaikin, Sam Shepard, and Ethan Hawke. Zeiger holds an MFA in Film Production from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. He also holds certificates in Leadership and Executive Learning and Organizational Change from Northwestern.

“We are pleased to have Jonah Zeiger as the new leader of our incredible Chicago Film Office. Jonah brings a wealth of experience on all sides of the film industry and a true passion for Chicago creatives,” shared **DCASE Commissioner Erin Harkey**. “This is an exciting time of growth for our film and TV industry, and with Jonah at the helm, the Film Office will continue to innovate and accelerate its economic impact.”

Chicago Film Office

The Chicago Film Office, part of DCASE, leads the City’s efforts to attract and enhance the production of feature films, television series, commercials, documentaries and all forms of local screen entertainment. For filmmakers, it is a one-stop liaison for all City of Chicago production needs, including permits, City services and logistical support.

The Chicago Film Office ranks first in the Midwest region for production. In 2021, the Chicago Film Office generated more than \$300,000 in permit revenue, double the permit revenue from the same months in 2019 and in 2020. In 2021, the Chicago Film Office launched the innovative “Chicago Made” workforce development program, which aims to transform the region’s TV and film workforce by offering



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job training and placement to Chicago residents ages 24 to 50, primarily from underserved areas of our city, to help meet the industry's increasing demand for skilled workers. For more information, visit chicagomade.us.

The City of Chicago partners with the Illinois Film Office to award a 30% tax credit for film, television and advertising productions who can demonstrate qualified expenditures on local crew, goods and services. Projected film production revenue in 2021 hit a record high of \$630 million, shattering pre-pandemic levels in 2019 by \$70 million.

Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

The City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) supports artists and cultural organizations, invests in the creative economy, and expands access and participation in the arts throughout Chicago's 77 neighborhoods. As a collaborative cultural presenter, arts funder, and advocate for creative workers, our programs and events serve Chicagoans and visitors of all ages and backgrounds, downtown and in diverse communities across our city — to strengthen and celebrate Chicago. DCASE produces some of the city's most iconic festivals, markets, events, and exhibitions at the Chicago Cultural Center, Millennium Park, and in communities across the city — serving a local and global audience of 25 million people. The Department offers cultural grants and resources, manages public art, supports TV and film production and other creative industries, and permits special events throughout Chicago. For details, visit Chicago.gov/DCASE and [stay connected via our newsletters and social media](#).

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